Hoover War on New Left Bared

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The late J. Edgar Hoover issued written orders to all FBI offices in May, 1968, to "expose, disrupt and otherwise neutralize" the New Left movement.

He dsicontinued the campaign without explanation three years later.

The Hoover memoranda were made public yesterday by acting Attorney General Robert H. Bork after the Justice Department decided not to appeal a U. S. District Court decision requiring production of the documents. NBC newsman Carl Stern sued for release of the Hoover memoranda under the Freedom of Information Act.

Hoover directed that the disruption program be carried out in heavy secrecy and that it be aimed at "disrupting the organized activity of these groups . . . No opportunity should be missed to capitalize upon organizational and personal conflicts of their leadership."

The targets of the FBI counter-intelligence campaign were described by Hoover as "New Left organizations and key activists."

The May 10, 1968, memo instructed: "The devious maneuvers and duplicity of these activists must be exposed to public scrutiny through the cooperation of reliable news media, both locally and at the seat of government." (Seat of government was Hooverese for Washington, D.C.)

The directive charged all bureau offices throughout the nation with the responsibility for taking advantage "of all opportunities for counter-intelligence and also inspire action in instances where circumstances warrant."

Hoover did not spell out the specific nature of those actions.

Justice Department officials said there was no evidence in the agency's files that then-Attorney General Ramsey Clark approved or was even aware of the New Left counter-intelligence program. Stern's suit called for production of all documents that related to the campaign.

In his memorandum launching the campaign Hoover cautioned that "the nature of this new endeavor is such that under no circumstances should the existence of the program be made known outside the bureau and appropriate within-office security should be afforded this sensitive operation."

J. EDGAR HOOVER
. . . secret campaign

He added:

"The bureau has been very closely following the activities of the New Left and the key activists and is highly concerned that the anarchistic activities of a few can paralyze institutions of learning, induction centers, cripple traffic and tie the arms of law enforcement officials to the detriment of our society.

"The organizations and activists who spout revolution and unlawfully challenge society to obtain their demands must not only be contained, but must be neutralized," he said.

Hoover's memo canceling the bureau's counter-intelligence effort, labeled by the late director as "COINTELPROS," was issued on April 28, 1971.

"Effectively imediately," the Director decreed, "all COINTELPROS operated by this bureau are discontinued." He enumerated specifically programs against espionage, the New Left, white hate groups, the Communist Party USA, black extremists and the Socialist Workers Party disruption program.

During the year prior to the cancellation relations between Hoover and the Nixon administration grew severely strained. Hoover was privately criticized in controversial memoranda of former White House domestic security adviser Tom Charles Huston for having been ineffective in dealing with internal security matters.

President Nixon announced last May that because of Hoover's objections he canceled a July 15, 1970, decision memorandum authorizing electronic surveillance, mail inspection, break-ins and intensified informer tactics against American citizens and U.S. groups in domestic intelligence operations.

Release of the two Hoover memoranda yesterday was the first time the Justice Department released documents in a Freedom of Information Act challenge. Bork said, "The law and the public policy expressed in the Freedom of Information Act did not warrant appealing the District Court decision."